

ACT BLITS 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

(Text only copy - full version available at www.blits.org.au)

BLITS: Business Leaders Innovative Thoughts and Solutions

BLITS promotes initiatives that value and engage people with disabilities as customers, suppliers, employees and employers in business the arts and sport.

BLITS – An ACT Government Initiative

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Message from the Chief Minister

BLITS is an important ACT Government initiative that brings the Government and business community together to create more opportunities for people with disabilities. The BLITS advisory board and the chair of BLITS, Lois Ford, take seriously their mission to find innovative ways to raise awareness of the benefits of engaging people with disabilities in the workplace – as customers, employees and suppliers.

I congratulate BLITS on the development of the BLITS Champion program in 2008, a program which is continuing to gain momentum in 2009. Perhaps more importantly, I take this opportunity to recognise the BLITS Champions themselves, listed separately in this report, who have dedicated time, energy and expertise to ensure the BLITS message gets to a wider audience.

I acknowledge the role of BLITS in the continued development of the Chief Minister's Inclusion Awards, a program which recognises the outstanding achievements of businesses and individuals who are committed to inclusion in their workplace. In particular, I acknowledge the sponsors of these Awards.

I join with BLITS in thanking the businesses, community groups and individuals that are already doing great things to ensure Canberran's with a disability can participate in all aspects of life in our community. I encourage Canberra businesses to work with BLITS to discover the many benefits of engaging people with disabilities in their day-to-day operations.

Jon Stanhope
ACT Chief Minister
June 2009

From the Chair – The Year in Review

2008 was an exciting and fruitful year for the BLITS Advisory Board.

It was very satisfying to see that the work of the previous year gave the Board a solid base to launch a number of initiatives throughout 2008.

A roll call of activities includes:

- the development and launch of the BLITS Champions program
- the ACT Business Leaders Update events
- launch of the BLITS website and e-newsletter

- delivery – in partnership with BDW Special Events Management
– of the 5th annual ACT Chief Minister’s Inclusion Awards
- development of the industry roundtable series
- oversight of the Disability Awareness Program
- advice and support around implementing the ACT Companion Card

BLITS Champions Program

A highlight was the launch of the BLITS Champions Program. The BLITS Champions are members of the business and broader community who are ambassadors for the BLITS values, aims and objectives – lending their support in a range of ways to promote these.

We were delighted that Katy Gallagher, the ACT Treasurer (and at the time, Minister for Disability) launched the program at the very first ACT Business Leaders Update event in August 2008. Bill Shorten MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities – not only attended the event but addressed the audience – while MC Virginia Hausegger of ABC TV ensured smooth running of a well attended event. Our local champions were joined by national BLITS champion, actor Mary Coustas.

Thanks must go to Drake Medox for its sponsorship the launch. The Champions program plays a key role in the ongoing work of BLITS.

Business Communications

Communication to our audience and promotion of BLITS took a great leap forward in 2008 with the launch of our BLITS website. I encourage you to visit us at www.blits.org.au for useful links, diary dates and information for business on how to better engage with people with disabilities.

Keeping in touch, and up to date with happenings became easier too, through a regular BLITS E-newsletter, packed with profiles of inspiring people, news on legislative changes, tips and information.

A little about the ACT Business Leaders Update. These are events that target business leaders and provide information about the latest BLITS initiatives and are a great vehicle to get the message out to the business sector.

ACT Chief Minister’s Inclusion Awards

The fifth annual ACT Chief Minister’s Inclusion Awards were held in November 2008. These awards publicly recognise individuals, government, community and business organizations who have demonstrated a clear commitment to include people with disabilities in their daily operations.

BLITS again worked in partnership with BDW Event Management to present the Awards – a sparkling formal ceremony in the Great Hall of Parliament House. The event is growing each year. This is a sign that the spirit of inclusion – small change, big difference – is gaining momentum within the business sector.

As always BLITS acknowledges the generous support of our sponsors for this major event: Koomarri and Maximus Solutions – and category sponsors, Drake Medox, TADACT, Spotless and House with No Steps.

Thank you also to the Chair of Judges, Sue Salthouse and the judging panel for its work in assessing the award submissions. 2008 winners are contained in this report.

Following the 2008 Awards event, the Advisory Board committed to a review of the categories and the nomination and application process – largely aiming to increase the ‘market-ability’ to the broader community. The review occurred earlier this year and resulted in fine tuning of category type to ensure relevance to the business and community sector, as well as the simplification of the nomination process.

We are also pleased to announce that the 2009 Awards will include a perpetual award in honour of Margaret Spalding.

Industry Round Tables

To better reach the business sector, Industry Round Tables were developed and initiated during the year. The Round Tables are a series of informal gatherings focusing on specific industry sectors to identify opportunities and strategies that will raise the presence and participation of people with disabilities. The tourism, leisure and arts sectors were identified as providing terrific possibilities and these sectors will be targeted for 2009.

ACT Companion Card

Other work included BLITS’ involvement in the implementation of the ACT Companion Card. The ACT Government has committed to this scheme – which essentially allows for the two for one admission price for those people with disabilities who require attendant care for most activities in our community.

Work around this initiative is ongoing, with BLITS taking a key role in getting local businesses on board for the scheme.

Disability Awareness Program

Disability ACT’s Disability Awareness Program is a natural link to the work of BLITS which is why BLITS is undertaking the role of oversight body on this program. This three year program is aimed at increasing the participation, presence and respect for people with disabilities in the cultural, economic and social life of the ACT community. In 2008 targeted consultations were undertaken with a view to inform and develop the original themes and concepts based on a

'civics' model. BLITS will continue to work on the program's development and implementation in 2009 and 2010.

I take this opportunity to thank all the BLITS Champions, our supporters in the business world who help make real – our vision to include people with disabilities as customers, employees, employers and suppliers.

Special thanks to the Executive Officer, Frank Crews for his efforts in supporting and assisting the board.

In closing, I extend my personal thanks and gratitude to each member of the BLITS Advisory Board for their hard work and continued dedication in working towards our objectives and aims.

Lois Ford

Chair
BLITS

BLITS Advisory Board Members 2008

Lois Ford	Executive Director, Disability ACT
Jacky Ryles	Capital Careers
John O'Neill	Executive Director TADACT
Glenn Keys	CEO, Aspen Medical
Morna Whiting	Co-Owner Old Bus Depot Markets
Evelyn Scott OAM	Parent Representative
Cheryl Patrick	Parent Representative
Sally Richards	Parent Representative
Jeff Thompson	LEAD
Joseph Griffiths	Great Southern Hospitality Management
Kate Pickering	Branch Manager ACT, Drake Medox
Paul Donohoe	Inclusion Awards Project Manager

BLITS Officers

Frank Crews	BLITS Executive Officer
Lindsay Burge	DACT Community Development Officer
Amanda Richmond	Secretariat Assistant

BLITS Champions

BLITS Champions are members of the business and broader community who share the BLITS values, aims and objectives and generously support our efforts in a myriad of ways and in their daily life. This includes, but is not limited to identifying mutually advantageous opportunities between businesses and people with disabilities and assisting the BLITS advisory board to make the connections which will deliver positive outcomes partnering business and people with disabilities.

BLITS Champions – ACT

Dr Colin Adrian
Chief Executive
Canberra Institute of Technology

Doug Edwards
Chief Operating Officer
Prime Television Limited

Christine Faulks
CEO, Canberra Business Council

Jeremy Lasek
Chief of Staff for the ACT Chief Minister

Eoghan O'Byrne
General Manager
Canberra FM Radio – Mix 106.3 / 104.7

Christopher Peters (Chris) AM
Chief Executive,
ACT & Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Simonne Shepherd
General Manager
Australian Capital Tourism Champions

Ivan Slavich
General Manager
Retail Operations ActewAGL & TransACT

Fiona Wright
President
Restaurant and Catering Association

Cindy Young
Manager
National Convention Centre

BLITS Champions – National

Mary Coustas

Kerri-Anne Kennerley

Jean Kittson

ACT Chief Minister’s Inclusion Award Recipients 2008

<u>Award Category</u>	<u>Winner</u>
Chief Minister’s Award of Excellence	AMF Bowling Belconnen
Inclusion in Small Business	Impact Comics
Inclusion in Medium/Large Business	AMF Bowling Belconnen
Inclusion ACT Government Departments /Agencies	Futures Program Canberra College (VET staff)
Inclusion in the Community	Team Award Belconnen High – Autism Inclusion Team
Inclusion in the Community – Individual Award	Dick Passchier Department of Territory and Municipal Services
Inclusion in the Community – Team Award	Kate Boljkovac ACT Record Services
Inclusion in Marketing	Capital Careers
Inclusion in Tourism	AMF Bowling Belconnen
Judges Recognition Award	Tuggeranong Valley Rugby Union Club (Vikings Club)

ACT Chief Ministers Inclusion Awards Judging Panel – 2008

Chair of Judges Sue Salthouse

Judging Panel Sheree Henley
 Cindy Young
 Jan Collins
 Justyn McDonald

Awards Coordinator Frank Crews

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